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C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 001358

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: POLISH DEPUTY PM HAUSNER SUBMITS OFFERS TO RESIGN,
BUT SO FAR REMAINS IN OFFICE

Classified By: DCM Cameron Munter. Reasons: 1.5 (B) and (D).

¶1. (U) Polish Deputy PM and Minister of Economy and Labor Jerzy Hausner submitted his resignation to Polish PM Marek Belka on March 9. It is now up to Belka to decide if he will accept Hausner's resignation, and if so, when it will be effective.

¶2. (C) Sources in the PM's Chancery were unsure of which course Belka will take, although press reports suggested that he will accept Hausner's resignation. Gabriel Beszlej, a department director in the Prime Minister's office (please protect), told us in confidence that "if the PM is a serious person, he will not accept the resignation... One does not change horses when the stable (i.e. parliamentary elections) is in sight." He speculated that the resignation is likely an attempt to clear the atmosphere around Hausner. He pointed out that in a 2004 scandal over computer security at the MFA a similar tactic had been used to break the press and opposition pressure. Then FM Cimoszewicz resigned, but the PM did not accept his resignation and this ended the scandal. The director added that even if Belka were to accept Hausner's resignation, he could make it effective in several months. Other Chancery sources believed that Belka will accept the resignation, but make it effective only once a replacement had been found.

¶3. (SBU) Hausner suggested to journalists that the reason for his resignation was the political controversy in the wake of his announcement that he plans to join the nascent center-left Democratic Party (PD), a move criticized by both the governing Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and the opposition. On March 7, the populist Self-Defense Party (SO) submitted a no-confidence motion against Hausner in the Sejm, which most of the opposition appears to support.

¶4. (SBU) Ministry of Economy sources reported that one of the ministry's undersecretaries had called the ministry's employees together for a meeting and told them that both the ministry and minister Hausner would continue to function as planned at least through Easter. He added that travel plans remain in place, including Hausner's visit to Washington March 17-18.

¶5. (C) Hausner's offer to resign is not surprising, considering that he has thrown his lot in with the opposition PD. Politically, Hausner's departure from the government could give momentum to the formation of PD and, to a lesser degree, increase pressure for spring elections. However, parliamentary elections will take place this year in any case (possibly in May or June, but at the latest in September). The markets have taken this fact into account and do not expect any new initiatives from the Belka government, either with or without Hausner. Instead, they are focused on Poland's steadily improving economy. The political scene in Poland is unsettled, but we expect few changes of course in policy.

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